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TEAM TEACHING WITH PAPERBACKS.

BY- KENYON, DONALD

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TEACHERS AT COVINA HIGH SCHOOL, SAN DIMAS, CALIFORNIA, UTILIZED THE TEAM TEACHING APPROACH TO ENGLISH IN GRADES 9 THROUGH 12. IN ORDER TO DEVELOP LIFE-TIME READERS AT COVINA HIGH, PAPERBACKS WERE USED EXTENSIVELY TO PROMOTE INTEREST IN READING. TEACHERS TRIED TO GET THE RIGHT BOOK TO THE RIGHT PERSON AT THE RIGHT TIME. IT WAS FELT THAT PUPILS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL SHOULD BE SURROUNDED WITH BOOKS TO TEMPT THE VIRTUAL NONREADER AS WELL AS THE COLLEGE PREPARATORY STUDENTS. TAPES, FILMS, AND MAGAZINES WERE ALSO USED. IT WAS DEEMED ESSENTIAL THAT THE TEACHER READ WIDELY IN ORDER TO SHARE HIS KNOWLEDGE WITH STUDENTS AND TO BE ABLE TO SUGGEST GOOD BOOKS AT ANY TIME. A NUMBER OF SOURCES FOR THE ACQUISITION OF PAPERBACKS AND A REFERENCE LIST ARE PROVIDED. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH CONFERENCE (HONOLULU, NOVEMBER 23-25, 1967). (JM)

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Donald Kenyon
408 De Anza Hts. Drive
San Dimas California

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Team Teaching with Paperbacks

We have teams teaching freshman through senior English at Covina High. They are loosely or tightly knit together depending upon the number of students and teachers involved at any one grade, personnel changes, and problems of scheduling. Three teachers with common class assignments, the same planning periods, and contiguous rooms can work together more closely than eight with diversified schedules that take them to all parts of the campus during the school day.

All of our team teaching centers on the availability of a large group room or auditorium that holds 100-120 students with ease, and which has sliding walls that open into two other classrooms in the back.

Mrs. Julia Matcha and I have written more in detail of our experience with a closely knit team on the sophomore level in an article "Trying out for a Team" that is scheduled to appear soon in the English Journal.

Let us concentrate today on reading and paperbacks.

The goal in reading at Covina High is life-time readers. We try to get the right book to the right person at the right time as often as possible. We try to make the student aware that whatever his interest or level of reading, there is a book for him--probably hundreds of books for him that he doesn't want to miss.

Reading only textbooks won't do it. They are the dull, bare skelton of life that was; e.g., the only textbook that I remember approaching the original text in interest was Coffin and Witherspoon's introduction to the authors in their 17th Century Literature anthology--and there are some who will say that this was only in comparison. Not I--never has English

RE 001 141

Donald Kenyon
408 De Anza Hts. Drive
San Dimas California

prose been any finer than in the 17th century when it had had time to mature, and still showed classic discipline.

How do we go about achieving this goal? We surround the student with books. The reading lab and the team teaching program for sophomore English were simultaneous developments in 1962-63. Although Mary Robertson, our department chairman, had been working for its formation for years, this was the first time that money was actually available.

Mrs. Robertson, Mr. Nottingham, then the assistant principal, and the sophomore team decided to try to get the whole school to read by surrounding the students in every English classroom with colorful paperbacks, by having others on sale in the student store, and by using the Scholastic Literature kits. Added to these were an increasing number of interesting supplementary books, SRA kits, Tactics kits--and classroom sets of Literary Cavalcade, Reader's Digest, and Atlantic Monthly. But the library is our basic source. We have been blessed with good librarians--Mrs. Cohee, Mrs. Harnsberger, and Mrs. Berge and their staffs.

We find out where a student is. A Nelson Silent Reading Test is excellent for average freshmen and the Nelson-Denny is fine for sophomores and beyond. An extremely low score on either would call for an immediate individual conference and a Gray Oral Reading Test, or a Botel Reading Inventory, or parts of both.

We find out the student's interests. A short personal survey might include such questions as these:

1) What are the three best books that you have read in a year or two?

2) What kinds of books do you like or what are your interests?

Donald Kenyon
408 De Anza Hts. Drive
San Dimas California

3) What do you want to do with the next 25-40 years of your life?

4) How do you plan to train yourself for this?

Now is the time to produce at least one possible book for each student, and to start as soon as possible having individual talks with the students about his or her reading. Whenever possible we try to match the book to the reader whose interests may be limited or universal and whose reading rate may be from less than a hundred words a minute to seven, eight, and nine hundred words per minute on non-technical material.

This is the one sure way to develop people who read all of their lives and when successful, a most satisfying experience. I am thinking of a boy who started the summer of 1963 devouring books on World War II, including Samuel Eliot Morrison's official histories of the naval battles, who branched out into books like Only Yesterday, who read twenty-three books in seven weeks, who went from the last to the first quartile in a standardized reading test, and who may now be a prospective high school history teacher.

Paperbacks are displayed so that the individual covers intrigue the student (perhaps not quite as much as the covers on paperbacks in drug-stores and delicatessens beckon to his father) and make it next to impossible for him not to want to read. To do this we use Masonite peg-boards and their F-21-AD double literature racks which should be available from any good wholesale hardware supply firm. Students automatically browse before the period begins and whenever they are free from formal instruction. Many teachers will testify to the enthusiasm with which new titles are received.

Our paperbacks range from material that a virtual non-reader would be tempted to tackle to that which would challenge the best of our

Donald Kenyon
408 De Anza Hts. Drive
San Dimas California

college preparatory students. However, one area in which we could improve would be in the more expensive specialized paperbacks that are available in a good book store like Pickwick's in Hollywood.

A boy who has never read a book in grades four to eight doesn't become an A student when he arrives at high school, nor a prospective doctoral candidate in English by putting him in front of a reading machine for four weeks. Anyone can learn to run a gadget in fifteen minutes. They aren't a panacea. Enthusiasm for reading is what counts. Cosper-Griffin's Toward Better Reading Skill gives one of the best single descriptions of what a developmental reading program is that I have seen as yet.

The really good reader reads, reads, reads until it comes out his mouth--or spills over onto paper. Please see the February 1st Campus Book Club News--where G. Robert Carlson reports on how good adult readers got that way--by being omnivorous readers of books when young.

We use supplementary class sets of hardback books as well as class sets of paperbacks. However, caution is called for in forcing anyone to read any book as a class assignment. I am thinking of a boy whom I tutored at Syracuse University the summer of 1965. He had been assigned to read Valiant Voyage, which I consider one of the two or three top adventure stories of all time before his reading ability enabled him to enjoy it on his own. We don't assign anything that we aren't personally enthusiastic about.

Much teacher reading aloud is a must in helping the reluctant reader to realize what books have to offer him. Each student should have a copy of the material being read in front of him. He'll usually keep up unless

Donald Kenyon
408 De Anza Hts. Drive
San Dimas California

he is a very handicapped reader, or he loses himself in the story so that he forgets to turn a page.

Tapes allow the handicapped reader to share stories and books that he otherwise would miss or possibly come to dislike. Team teaching should allow some time for personal taping. Volunteers in the community should also be sought for and recognized for their contributions.

There must be freedom of individual choice--a boy who barely finished Little Britches in five weeks of summer school in the next school year read all twelve of the Man from U.N.C.L.E. books while branching out in still another dozen books. Another boy, a sophomore, read Steinbeck and Dickens in depth before trying Henry James on his own.

Films such as The Human Comedy, Shane, Great Expectations, Reach for the Sky, The Grapes of Wrath, and The Red Badge of Courage give the students an opportunity to compare the pictures formed in their own minds from the reading of the books with those portrayed on the screen by actors under skilled directors. Why is this scene strengthened and that one left out entirely? Is the film faithful to the author's and reader's story? Which is more real? Do all three reinforce each other to give a more total picture of life?

Magazines too, are a part of our classroom environment. Hundreds of National Geographics are there for the free moment of browsing; Sports Illustrated and Sporting News for the sports-minded; Outdoor Life and others for the hunter, fisherman, and camper; Life and Look and Saturday Evening Post always; and specialized fare such as how to manage the newest hair styles. Literary Cavalcade, Practical English, and Scope, are used often, but with restraint in assignments.

Donald Kenyon
408 De Anza Hts. Drive
San Dimas California

Where are paperbacks for high school classrooms available? This should be a needless question to ask today, but unless you are on the mailing lists of the many publishers who are trying to reach you and your students through their advertisements in the English Journal and Methods and Media and who send representatives to our conventions held throughout the country, you may not be aware of the hundreds of titles in many series that are aimed at the adolescent reader. These include Berkley Highland, Signet Key, Bantam Pathfinder, Pyramid Willow, Nova, Voyager, Bal-Hi, Tempo, Camelot, Dell's Laurel Leaf, and Mayflower to mention a few. Washington Square's New Archway series include the Messner line of excellent biographies. Be sure to include the Scholastic and AEW book clubs. Furthermore, it is a great help to have an understanding wholesaler who allows you to browse in his warehouse looking for titles.

This brings us to the difficulties of obtaining some titles when you want them. Hundreds of titles come to the warehouse each week, are sent out to the news stands, delicatessens, drugstores, liquor stores, and paperback stores, and then after a short stay are removed from the shelves and returned to the warehouse where the crying need for space demands that all but the proven year-round sellers be returned to the publishers for credit. The publishers might well consider national or regional book depositories where we could order direct the titles that they are trying so hard to get us to use with our students.

Second-hand paperbacks are not always in mint condition, but for a nickel or a dime each, it is possible to build a classroom library fairly inexpensively. Good will, Salvation Army Thrift stores, swap meets, rummage sales, and garage sales often yield good titles if there is time to be selective. One garage sale last year yielded over four hundred fifty SF titles--always in demand among student readers.

Donald Kenyon
408 De Anza Hts. Drive
San Dimas California

Students can sometimes be persuaded to donate titles from their own paperback libraries--titles that they have outgrown or do not foresee wanting to read again in the immediate future. They also swap and pass on titles that they have enjoyed. When the lockers are cleaned in June, we partially replenish our classroom libraries.

Kits lead into a theme and then allow individual students to follow this theme in depth. Writing assignments, discussion questions, and skills to be taught are all ready made, but care, as the editors tell you themselves, must be used not to follow them too slavishly.

The library, as mentioned earlier, is the heart of any reading program. Paperbacks in the classroom lead the student to follow an interest in the wider resources of the school, city, county, and state libraries.

A book fair, either annually or semi-annually, ideally in the library with thousands of titles on hand for immediate purchase is part of surrounding the students with books.

Mrs. Marion Cohee, when she was our librarian, sponsored Books for Breakfast where faculty members and students might review books that they had enjoyed, or that they felt had something significant or timely to say. She also invited authors to speak on our campus. One year during one month's span we had Leonard Wibberley and Ralph Moody. I thought at the time, "No other high school campus can make this statement." Both are the best.

One boy, a reluctant reader from a family of reluctant readers, had been hooked on Little Britches, and had had his family buy all of Mr. Moody's books for him to read, long before anyone knew that there was a possibility of Mr. Moody's visiting our campus. When he turned away from

Donald Kenyon
408 De Anza Hts. Drive
San Dimas California

talking with Mr. Moody and having his books autographed, this boy was walking on air--literally.

Our Cardinal and White student newspaper has (with permission) carried lists of Clifton Fadiman's 200 Great Books, Sandy Koufax's Library for Teenagers, and advice from Abraham Lass that one good way to prepare for college is to read a book a week that no one has assigned, as well as student reviews of books.

It is essential for the teacher to read widely; in fact, anything that he reads has potential use in the classroom. It is good for his own flexibility of speeds to read fifty to a hundred adolescent books per year. To share this knowledge he might talk about books that he has liked to large groups on more than one grade level, make himself available before and after school and during breaks in the school day, and be ready with a suggestion of a good book at any time.

He should not guard the books. For some students his classroom library of paperbacks will call up an irresistible urge to borrow several at once--their only access to actually surrounding themselves with books. I am thinking of a girl in a foster home who borrowed twenty, a few at a time, and of a boy whose older brother and father read the books that he had borrowed before returning them. The family that reads together can't be all bad.

The teacher must read reviews wherever he can find them, read current book advertisements, browse in good paperback stores and if possible in the warehouse itself as well as keep abreast of Paperbacks in Print.

Donald Kenyon
408 De Anza Hts. Drive
San Dimas California

Here are ten paperback titles that we have used successfully. I should like to hear yours.

Bonham, Frank - Durango Street (Scholastic)

Brickhill, Paul - Reach for the Sky

Jesse Stuart Reader (Signet)

Lansing, Valiant Voyage (Scholastic)

Moody, Ralph - Little Britches (Bantam)

O'Connor - Treasure at Twenty Fathoms (Berkley Highland)

Black Tiger

Saroyan, William - The Human Comedy (Dell)

Here He Comes, There He Goes--You Know Who

Schaefer, Jack - Shane (Bantam)

Sohn, David, editor - Ten Top Stories (Bantam Pathfinder)

Steinbeck, John - The Pearl (Bantam)

The Moon Is Down (Bantam)

Viereck, Phillip - The Summer I Was Lost (Signet)